ISSN 1059-1249

The Magic Lantern Gazette

Volume 25, Number 2 Summer 2013

The Magic Lantern Society of
the United States and Canada

www.magiclanternsociety.org

Summer in the Adirondack Mountains

The gloomy precipice of Indian Pass hung like a frown over the darker ravine below, and peak after peak darkened around the towering monument of rock, till only two of this glorious brotherhood of unshorn summits smiled upon the wide solitude. While I watched the light and shade throwing their **dissolving views** upon the waving canvas of interminable foliage, a cloud spread its wing over the west, and caught away its lingering radiance.

New York Evangelist, August 13, 1846

This special issue of the *Gazette* focuses on research on magic lanterns done by graduate students. The first article is the winner of our second annual Student Essay Award. The author, Jeremy Brooker, completed his Ph.D. this summer at the University of London. His fascinating essay describes the interface between magic lanterns and the world of dreams and reveries, a common literary theme in the 19th century. The main focus of Jeremy's Ph.D. research was on the magic lantern at the Royal Polytechnic.

Our second feature article, which also is the cover article, is by society member Esther Morgan-Ellis, the winner of our first annual Student Essay Award for an article published previously in the Gazette. Her new contribution describes the use of sing-along slides, audience singing, and organ music in early movie theaters. Esther completed her Ph.D. at Yale University earlier this summer and recently accepted a position as Assistant Professor at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega, Georgia.

The Research Page, which summarizes recent academic research on topics related to the magic lantern, contains published abstracts of five recent Ph.D. dissertations from universities in the United States, Canada, and England that relate in some way to magic lanterns, with topics ranging from the phantasmagoria to the use of lantern slides in advertising. Included in this group is the abstract of Esther Morgan-Ellis's complete Ph.D. dissertation.

This issue is rounded out with a short review of society member Erkki Huhtamo's wonderful scholarly book on the history of moving panoramas and related visual spectacles. His book includes a discussion of the magic lantern as a competitor of moving panoramas and should be of interest to many readers of the *Gazette*. It should make an ideal Christmas gift for anyone interested in early visual entertainments.

I plan to write up a long article on the lecturing career of Professor Cromwell, who lectured with the stereopticon for nearly 30 years, for the next *Gazette*. After that, the cupboard is bare—I am in dire need of additional contributions for subsequent issues of the *Gazette*. Research articles of almost any length can be published with abundant illustrations. Interior illustrations will appear in the print version of the *Gazette* in black and white, but they will appear in full color when issues are posted on the San Diego State University webpage at the end of the calendar year. Other types of articles are welcome as well. These might include short articles on a particular special or unusual slide or set of slides, a rare magic lantern, other collectibles. Also consider submitting accounts of your adventures in tracking down magic lanterns and slides for your collection.

Kentwood D. Wells, Editor
451 Middle Turnpike
Storrs, CT 06268
kentwood.wells@uconn.edu
860-429-7458

"The Flute Lesson." Wells collection.

Signor Topsey-Turveys's Wonderful Magic Lantern: Subversion, Inversion and Transformation in the Land of Dreams

Jeremy Brooker
3 Roselands Gardens, Canterbury, CT2 7LP, UK
jrbrooker@hotmail.com

Here you may see what's very rare,
The world turn'd upside down;
A tree and castle in the air,
A man walk on his crown[1]

Introduction

The intuitive association between shadows and dreams must surely be a very ancient one. Firelight lends fantastical distortions to everyday objects; a sometimes alarming confusion of the real and imaginary. Like dreams, these images appear to rise unbidden out of the darkness, and despite attempts at rational explanation their content is sometimes disturbing and apparently outside our control. Plato evokes this ambiguity in his famous allegory of the Cave, in which he explores perceptions of reality through a group of chained prisoners whose ignorance of the outside world obliges them to accept shadow figures cast on the cave wall as reality itself. Sleep embodies a series of dualities which strike at the heart of our 'real', waking existence. It is a state in which 'sleep and consciousness, reason and imagination, reality and representation, soul and body, and meaning and function, all mingle promiscuously.' [2]

Enlightenment philosophers were much preoccupied with the relationship between the rational mind and the irrational world of dreams. John Locke regarded sleep as the antithesis of conscious thought, and as such incompatible with waking life. Though our senses might impinge on dreams to some extent, their content was otherwise without significance.[3] To David Hume, dreams were a forum in which our true thoughts were unconstrained, worthy of careful (waking) scrutiny as a glimpse into our true natures.[4] George Berkley speculated that real things were somehow more vivid than dreams; a process of comparison which unfortunately required the dreamer to apply (waking) retrospection.[5]

Long before Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical interpretations, there had been speculation that dreams might carry meaning which could inform our waking lives. Biblical accounts describe dreams as a source of prophetic knowledge or a conduit for divine revelation, and this raised the question of how we might distinguish between these significant dreams and those of a more prosaic nature. In *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Daniel Defoe's castaway is seized with an ague which lasts for nearly ten days. In his restless sleep, Crusoe is visited by a terrible vision of an angel, which prompts him to reflect on his 'profound neglect of his duty to God'. Defoe carefully contextualises this vision to establish its divine origins 'setting forth those special circumstances which might authorize the reception of divine dream directives'.[6]

The Romantic imagination saw dreams as a gateway to new creative possibilities which could never be accessed through

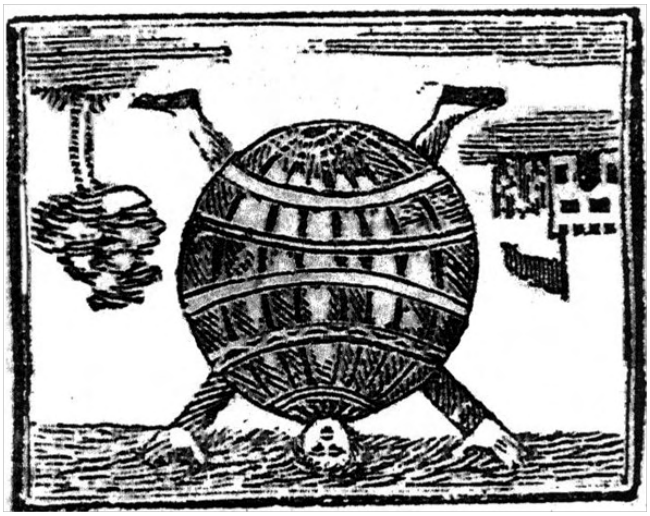


Fig. 1. *The World Turned Upside Down; or, No News, and Strange News*, J. Kendrew, York, ca.1860. British Library General Reference Collection Cup.550.g.222.

Fig. 2. *Robinson Crusoe Dreaming*, lantern slide. Author's collection.

conscious thought. By freeing the mind from its normal constraints, what might be imagined? Some famously sought to influence the dream state and precipitate creative insights. Coleridge's experiments with opium are well known, and Fuselli is said to have created his most famous canvas, *The Nightmare* (1781), after ingesting a meal of raw pork. Freud became fascinated by the glimpse into the creative process afforded by dreams. In *The Interpretation of Dreams,* he quotes a letter from Friedrich Schiller in which the poet tries to explain the creative process as the antithesis of controlled and disciplined thought. 'In the case of the creative mind, it seems to me, the intellect has withdrawn its watchers from the gates, and the ideas rush in pell-mell.'[7] In dreams, Freud believed he could glimpse the workings of the mind, and access psychic knowledge of a kind not available through science or conscious experiences.

Magic Lantern Dreams

Many writers have noted a similarity between 'disembodied, immaterial lantern images and our own internal visual representations'.[8] Alexander Pushkin compares his elusive thoughts to 'the swift apparitions/Engendered in a magic lantern', which 'Flash across the white screen' before disappearing like shadows at dawn.[9] Similar allusions can be found in, amongst others, Thomas Hardy, Leo Tolstoy and Charlotte Brontë.[10] Dickens seems to have had a particular fondness for the magic lantern, which featured in both his own childhood and that of his children, and lantern references appear frequently in his novels, travel writing and personal letters. His *Pictures from Italy* (1846) concludes with *An Italian Dream* in which Dickens describes his jumbled impressions after an exhausting journey of several days:

> At intervals, some one among them would stop, as it were, in its restless flitting to and fro, and enable me to look at it, quite steadily, and behold its full distinctness. After a few moments, it would dissolve, like a view in a magic-lantern… This was no sooner visible than, in its turn, it melted into something else.[11]

Elsewhere, Dickens tells of the difficulty of writing in the peaceful seclusion of Switzerland, without access to the bustle of London. '[The] toil and labour of writing, day after day, without that magic lantern is *immense*'.[12] For Dickens, the magic lantern represents a bewildering, dream-like sequence of impressions; a series of 'glasses in a magic lantern, [which] never took their shape at my bidding, but seemed to force themselves upon me, whether I would or no.'[13]

To these writers, the magic lantern provides a metaphor for some aspects of human thought. However, there are important distinctions between the projected image and the dream screen imagined by writers and psychologists. In magic lantern performance, we are invited to visit places we have never visited and to vicariously share the experiences and memories of others. This process is generally mediated by a narrator who signals the meaning of these images by drawing our attention to details that might otherwise be overlooked, and often enhanced by music which provokes an emotional or psychological response. These are dreams played out not in the private, hidden world of the id, but in the public arena of shared experience. The darkened chamber directs our gaze to the screen, attempting to control our senses as if in sleep, but we are still aware of our own consciousness. They are waking dreams; or perhaps more accurately, magic lantern performance inhabits the liminal space between wakefulness and sleep. Through this medium, we are able to step outside the bounds of common experience to observe the transitions between these states, and perhaps also to confront our own nocturnal fears.

These possibilities are clearly evoked in the most famous of all lantern images, in which a sleeping man inadvertently swallows a horde of rats when he opens his mouth to snore. He falls asleep in the safety of his own bed, and it is only in sleep that these nightmarish apparitions appear. A cat watches impotently from outside the bedroom window and can offer no protection. There is vulnerability in sleep, and perhaps this vulnerability is not just physical. The ingestion of rats evokes the ancient belief that diet can influence our dreams, and the course of the sleeper's thoughts are no more under his control than is the safety of his own unguarded physical existence.

Fig. 3. *Man Eating Rats*, lantern slide. Author's collection.

The superimpositions made possible with a biunial lantern allow us to see both the sleeper and his secret thoughts; an *Arabian Nights*-style dream within a dream. In lantern slides, as in sentimental prints of the period, angels allay parental fears by appearing over the cribs of sleeping infants and innocent dreams appear above juvenile heads. One of the earliest and most widely disseminated magic lantern dream narrative was a realisation of Thomas Campbell's war poem *The Soldier's Dream* (1804). A soldier escapes the privations of war through sleep, and sees the home and family he has left behind. Glimpsing his unguarded thoughts, we are granted a psychological insight into the humanity of the battle-hardened soldier.

The World Turned Upside Down

Sleep gives licence to bizarre, even subversive and anarchic thoughts, beyond the control of the waking, rational mind. To an extent, this same licence extends to the magic lantern and lantern slides often feature grotesques, caricatures, distorted evocations of everyday life and inversions of the natural order. Such imagery is often derived from much older narrative and print traditions. The form of graphic satire known as *Die Verkehrte Welt* (a phrase generally translated as *The Topsy-Turvy World*) can be traced from at least the sixteenth century, and its themes are frequently encountered in magic lantern slides.

> With sheets of this absurd kind the popular print claims the kind of freedom which was traditionally reserved for the fool—the freedom to castigate, slyly or by clowning, fashionable silliness as well as hypocrisy and ostentation… In its grotesquely bizarre and at the same time deliberately provocative intentions it maintains a knife-edge balance between nonsense and moral criticism.[14]

Fig. 4. *Die Verkehrte Welt* lantern slide. Author's collection.

Though such narratives seem to point a moral, they are pervaded by a dark humour which frequently undermines any didactic message. The images from this inverted world are bizarre and fantastical, often with an uncomfortable vein of cruel sadism:

> And there I saw a great fat ox, in butcher's garments dressed, / And on a butcher's trolley he three boys together pressed; / Two heads were dangling dang'rously between the trolley wheels, / The ox then knocks their heads about, and laid them by the heels.[15]

There is an injunction to treat others (animals, the natural world, even inanimate objects) as we would ourselves like to be treated. The three butcher's boys suffer a fate they had so often meted out to the animals in their care and items of clothing beat the owner who neglects their proper maintenance. As befits a didactic experience, this message appears to inform the waking actions of the dreamer:

> Then I woke up, and this I learned from all my dreamings queer- / Be kind to all dumb creatures, and then them you need not fear; / It's just as easy to be so, and never cruel be, / And think of that just now, my friends, and pray be kind to me.[16]

However, the injunction to lead a better life is undermined with gently humorous effect in the final line. The 'message' is a playful one, which is not intended to be taken too seriously.

The collection of poems *Signor Topsey-Turveys's Wonderful Magic Lantern; or, The World Turned Upside Down* (1810) plays on the interchangeability of this print tradition and magic lantern imagery.[17] An introductory Advertisement

acknowledges the debt to earlier 'Topsy-Turvey' publications long familiar to 'Those grandmammas and aunts who are versed in the nursery learning'. At the same time, its verses adopt the form of a magic lantern entertainment given by the eponymous lanternist. The designation 'Signor' denotes a foreigner; perhaps an itinerant Savoyard showman, of the type long associated with such entertainments.[18]

In Stanza 12, *The Fish Turned Fishers,* hares become huntsmen and anglers are hooked by their former prey:

> The woods were deserted, the fishes arose / In spirited shoals from the tide; / Hares now were the sportsmen, and cours'd for the beaux, / Poor anglers were hooked by the nose, / And the whole race of fox hunters died.[19]

This had long been a familiar trope in print and on glass.

Fig. 5. *The World Turned Upside Down; or, No News, and Strange News* J. Kendrew, York, ca.1860. British Library General Reference Collection Cup.550.g.222.

Taylor's verses describe other familiar reversals of the natural order with men forced to pull carts and plough fields under the ruthless vigilance of beasts, while cooks are boiled alive in their own kitchens.

The location in which these impossible *Die Verkehrte Welt* images exist is seldom made explicit in print sources, operating in some non-specific alternate reality. Sometimes, this dream-like space of the imagination is explicitly identified with sleep. In F. Grove Palmer's *The World Inverted*:

> There's a land I've often been to- in my dreams I wander there, / Where ev'ry square thing's circular and all the rounds are square. / A night or two ago I went, when fast asleep I fell- / And if you care to listen, what I saw there I will tell.[20]

Fig. 6. (*The Fish Turned Fishers)*, *Die Verkehrte Welt* lantern slide. Author's collection.

The twelve dream scenes which follow have a nightmarish quality with gruesome depictions of a man being sawn in half by a tree, a giant lobster plunging a cook into boiling water, a deer hunting a man and so on. Each time the scene is set for a calamity, the dreamer awakes (as from a nightmare) just before the *dénouement.*

In *Signor Topsey-Turvey,* this dream world is explicitly identified with the magic lantern. As the frontispiece and introductory poem make clear, it is the lantern itself which (quite literally) turns the world upside down.

Fig. 7. Ann Taylor, *Signor Topsy-Turveys's Wonderful Magic Lantern; or, The World Turned Upside Down*, Tabart & Co., London, 1810. Frontispiece. British Library Document Supply W91/6098

I can't tell the story for truth, but 'tis said
That the first *Magic Lantern* that ever was made,
Perplex'd the inventor extremely;
For houses, and people, and all that he shew'd,
In spite of his efforts, could only be view'd
Upside down, which was very unseemly.

Making a virtue of necessity, Taylor imagines the lanternist continuing to show his pictures in this inverted state, and so attracting a distinguished audience. When a saboteur tricks him into showing his 'sliders' in conventional fashion, there are vociferous complaints:

The tumult was dreadful,- the gentlemen rose,
And said they *would* see *upside down*, if they chose,
They came with no other intention

For Taylor, the magic lantern permits and indeed demands this topsy-turvy view of the world and the logic of everyday life is not expected to intrude. The lantern becomes not only the source but also the context and raison d'être for these depictions of the dream world.

The children's story 'The Magic Lantern', from the collection *Tales from Dreamland* (1865) similarly equates the magic lantern with dreams and competing states of reality. A child, Ferd, goes to sleep after watching a domestic magic lantern entertainment featuring a horse-driven coach. In his dream, he finds himself inside this same coach, which now hurtles round the room periodically passing through the beam of light which comes from the lantern itself. The projected image is given a continuous corporeal existence outside the confines of the lantern screen, the shaft of light from the projector merely illuminating it momentarily as it passes by.

> The light shone full on them, but where the dusk was he could see crowds upon crowds of people, old and young, who stood and watched the stage-coach. It was people everywhere! "How they are watching us!" said Ferd.[21]

It is the audience members who have become artificial creatures, partially transparent and constructed like varnished automata, and the 'real' world is that experienced inside the lantern. Ferd moves between these worlds as he might pass from sleep to wakefulness, or indeed between life and death. Spiritualism, much in vogue at the time the story was written, is predicated on the possibility of such transitions, as is a macabre fascination with cataleptic states in which apparently dead people returned to full life.

The journalist W.T. Stead described his own clairvoyant experience in the 1890s by evoking reference to the magic lantern. He insisted on the absolute reality of this vision, citing the 'extraordinary precision and detail' as proof:

> I shut my eyes and waited for sleep to come; instead of sleep, however, there came to me a succession of curiously vivid clairvoyant pictures… It was as if I saw a living miniature about the size of a magic-lantern slide… It was not a picture—it was there… You see such things as these, as it were, with another sense, which is more inside your head than in your eyes.[22]

He is at pains to make it clear this was no ordinary dream, whose origins might lie in his own experience:

> The pictures were apropos of nothing; they had been suggested by nothing I had been reading or talking of, they simply came as if I had been able to look through a glass at what was occurring somewhere else in the world.[23]

This clairvoyant dream and its signifiers resembles the divine dreams mentioned above, though here with no obvious didactic intent. It is a dream which lies outside common experience, seemingly real despite existing only in the mind, and implies some kind of connection between the natural and spirit worlds. Stead describes his own experience as 'very poor and paltry', a mere glimpse of the clarity of experience witnessed by a true clairvoyant. Indeed, the very name 'clairvoyant' suggests visions that are as vivid, hence as 'real' as those we experience through our (waking) senses.

Didactic dreams for the magic lantern

The rationalist interpretation of dreams is neatly encapsulated by Wilkie Collins in a passage from his novel *Armadale* (1866). The eponymous hero has had a vivid and disturbing dream, which he dismisses as the meaningless product of a disturbed night brought on by indigestion. To his friend Midwinter the dream is a prophetic prediction of dire future events, requiring deliberate action to prevent catastrophe. Hawbury, a doctor and man of science, offers another explanation. After first demolishing both previous arguments (citing Armdale's cast iron digestion and the illogicality of Midwinter's reasoning), he explains that 'A dream is the reproduction in the sleeping state of the brain, of images and impressions produced on it in the waking state'.[24] He then relates every seemingly incongruous element of the dream to recent experiences, using the kind of deductive reasoning later adopted by the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

This prosaic and somewhat utilitarian approach to dreams is, Hawbury informs his auditors, the one commonly accepted by all men of reason. Though not subject to the same disciplines as conscious thought, dreams are the products of the

rational mind and as such are subject to rational interpretation. This indicates a clear hierarchy between sleeping and waking states, and suggests that by reflecting on the content of dreams the sleeper might gain insights to influence his waking actions.

This is an echo of Biblical dreams of a prophetic nature, which are sometimes represented in lantern slides. Nebuchadnezzar's dream features in the Riley slide set *The Story of Daniel*, and there are various depictions of Jacob's ladder, as described in the Book of Genesis. Such narratives present sleep as a spiritual or moral journey, whose purpose is to offer guidance. Dickens made use of this as a narrative device in *Gabriel Grubb* and *Christmas Carol,* both of which were popular magic lantern entertainments.

Gabriel Grubb is a story within a story, related on Christmas Eve by Mr. Pickwick. Dickens must surely have had the lantern in mind when he conceived this tale, with its series of visions appearing on the dark walls of the Goblin King's lair:

> As the goblin said this, a thick cloud, which obscured the remoter end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, the vision of a small and scantily-furnished, but clean and neat apartment.[26]

Despite the religious context (Grubb is a sexton, digging a grave on Christmas Eve), this is essentially a secular dream and its origins are deliberately left ambiguous. Dickens preserves the playful ambiguity of his moral message, in the spirit of earlier *Die Verkehrte Welt* publications. Its didactic significance is not lost on the dreamer, who awakes a changed man, unable to return to 'a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved'. However, we are left in doubt whether this was the product of divine intervention or mere drunkenness.

> The story has at least one moral, if it has no better one, that if a man turn sulky, and drink by himself at Christmas time, he may make up his mind to be not a bit the better for it; let spirits be never so good, or let them be even as many degrees beyond proof as those which Gabriel Grubb saw in the Goblin's cavern.2[7]

Scrooge's didactic visions in *The Christmas Carol* were similarly ambiguous. There was no doubting their didactic purpose. They were presaged not only by his own un-Christian actions towards those he encountered on that fateful Christmas Eve, and for many years past, but by the appearance of Marley's ghost who fore-warns him of the ghostly apparitions he will meet in sleep. After the revelations of past, present and terrible future he awakes a transformed man. Indeed, *The Christmas Carol* came to be regarded as almost a sacred text, 'a sermon, exemplifying Holy Writ itself'.[28] It was certainly one of the texts most widely used in Dickens' own public readings, and its message of redemption through kindness and compassion was close to his heart.[29] However, this is a secular tale and Dickens himself remains playfully ambivalent about the source of its message. Like *Die Verkehrte Welt* prints, he undermines an apparently didactic message through humour. When he revisits the pun which closed *Gabriel Grubb*, informing us that Scrooge 'had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle ever afterwards', he clearly did not intend this as a serious call to adopt temperance principles!

Nevertheless, *The Christmas Carol* spawned a host of imitators amongst the producers of life-model temperance slides, where didactic dreams become a recurring motif. Like Dickens, these writers use religion as a catalyst to prepare the dreamer and put him in a receptive state of mind, but there is no suggestion of direct divine intervention. Sleep becomes a period of personal reflection, a journey of the subconscious mind which revisits events of the day. Typical of these lantern narratives is *Dan Dabberton's Dream,* which opens on Christmas Eve in the taproom of a public house.[30] The mood of merrymaking and singing is disturbed by the entry of a stranger who, called upon to sing for the company, gives the temperance song *The Two Homes.* 'A quiet and sobered spirit came over the company, and like the crowd of *John 8* who accused a woman of gross sin, they went out one by one, Dan Dabberton with them.'

Chastened by this experience, Dan is forced to confront the reality of his life and the price his wife and daughter have paid for his own drunkenness. He imagines the church clock is reproaching him and is further discomforted by a visit from some carol singers. On entering his own house, Dan silences the grandfather clock, which seems to be endlessly repeating the phrase 'Drunk again', and falls into a drunken sleep. In his dream, Dan recalls the promises he made when he married, and sees the terrible fate that awaits his family. Clearly, this is to be no ordinary dream. Dan approaches sleep in a state of repentance, in which he is predisposed to confront the reality of his unworthy existence. In an echo of *Christmas Carol*, whose events take place within a single night, the action of stopping the ticking clock literally makes time stand still to blur the distinction between the real and unreal.

Perhaps the most elaborate of these didactic dream narratives, and certainly the most bizarre, is *Matt Stubbs' Dream.* Matt is a publican and on Christmas Eve is disturbed by the appearance of a poor woman, dressed in tattered rags and with a baby under her shawl, to buy gin.
It sets him thinking of his own past, and the events of

Fig. 8. *Dan Dabberton's Dream*, life model lantern slide. Author's collection.

previous Christmas Eves. Unlike Dickens' vision of Christmas past, however, these recollections serve only as a prelude to the dream itself, putting Matt in a receptive state of mind for the instructive dream which follows.

In sleep, Matt finds himself in his own bar-room, but here the pub fittings are magnified to giant size and come to life in a surreal and somewhat disrespectful manner. Eventually they take their places alongside the Demon King Drink, where they are joined by a hideous assortment of nightmarish figures, 'all typical drunkards both men and women with the haggard and defeatist look of drunkards'. The most terrible of these 'was one called Suicide. She had a ghastly grin from naked jaws and had a shrill whining voice.' The party ironically drink Matt's health, the host who had made this celebration possible. One of the guests relates a story, which seems to take place before Matt's eyes as a vision. It concerns a poor woman who is near death and on the verge of taking her own life through drowning, and Matt sees the hand of his own dead wife rescue the poor unfortunate from the water. On waking, Matt recognises the drowning woman as one who had earlier entered his bar, and eventually finds and rescues her. Mother and child are brought to live at Matt's inn, which becomes a Gospel Mission. 'Drink had been defeated, Salvation reigned.'

The debt to Dickens is obvious: the memories of Christmases past; the *Gabriel Grubb*-style dream-within-a-dream recounted by the drunkard; the personification of Suicide, after the ghastly children Ignorance and Want in *Christmas Carol.* However, this narrative has striking features. It is structurally complex with its long 'pre-dream', and its marked changes of register between naturalism of the overtly didactic elements and the bizarre imagery of the dream itself, which unequivocally belongs to *Die Verkehrte Welt*.

In a twist on the didactic dream, Charles Mackay's *The Dream of the Reveller, or; The Whiskey Demon*, shows the fate of those who will not heed such warnings.[32] The intoxicated crowd are so intent on living for the day that even when the Whiskey Demon himself appears before them and tells them of their inevitable fate, he knows they will not heed his lesson:

> 'Drink!' said the demon, 'drink your fill! / Drink of these waters mellow! / They'll make your eye-balls sear and dull, / And turn your white skins yellow; / They'll fill your homes with care and grief, / And clothe your backs with tatters; / They'll fill your hearts with evil thoughts; / But never mind—what matters?'

As befits the unthinking reveller, there is no preamble to prepare the way for a didactic dream, and unusually there is no waking up at the end of the dream to provide a symmetrical completion to the tale. Asleep or awake, the reveller is incapable of absorbing the important message he has received.

Conclusion

The prevalence of dreams as subject matter for magic lantern slides is striking, both through depictions of sleeping figures and the fantastical imagery of sleep. Perhaps this is a natural association for an entertainment almost synonymous with the hours of darkness and long winter evenings. If we are tempted to look for meaning behind these representations, we might see the magic lantern as providing a forum for safely addressing the fears engendered by sleep itself; not merely physical vulnerability but also the liminal fears engendered by our nightly transitions to sleep. These fears are of an existential and moral nature and can sometimes disturb the equilibrium of the waking mind; the bizarre, nightmarish, subversive, seemingly amoral images which populate our dreams seeming to challenge perceptions of self. Whether through bizarre humour, playfully subversive inversions of the natural order or dream narra-

tives intended to guide the observer to lead a more virtuous life, we are invited to confront these fears through the medium of Signor Topsey-Turvey's wonderful magic lantern.

Fig. 9. *Good Night*, lantern slide. Author's collection.

Notes and References

1. *The World Turned Upside Down; or, No News, and Strange News*, York: J. Kendrew, ca.1860.

2. William Wandless, 'Didactic Dream Transformations and the English novel of the Enlightenment' in *The Dream and The Enlightenment*, Bernard Dieterle and Manfred Engel (eds.) Paris: Honoré Champion 2003, p.225.

3. John Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Menston: Scholar Press, 1970.

4. David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

5. George Berkley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

6. Wandless, 2003, p.230.

7. Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* (*Die Traumdeutung*, 1899)) 3rd English edn., tr. A.A.Brill, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932.

8. Stephen Bottomore, 'A Word Paints a Thousand Pictures', in *Realms of Light: Uses and Perceptions of the Magic Lantern from the 17th to the 21st Century*, ed. Richard Crangle, Mervyn Heard, Ine van Dooren, Ripon: Magic Lantern Society, 2005, pp.56-61.

9. Alexander Pushkin, *Epistle for Yudin* (1815). For further examples, see Kentwood D. Wells, 'The Magic Lantern in Russia' in *The Magic Lantern Gazette* vol. 21 no.1, Spring 2009, pp.8-11.

10. *Jude the Obscure*, *War and Peace* and *Jane Eyre* respectively. See Bottomore 2005. I am also indebted to Trevor Beattie for sharing his reflections on the magic lantern in literature.

11. Charles Dickens, 'An Italian Dream', in *Pictures from Italy*, London: Bradbury and Evans, 1846, chapter 7.

12. Letter to John Forster 30 August 1846, www.victorianweb.org, accessed February 2013.

13. Charles Dickens, 'Return to Cincinnati', in *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842), London: Mandarin, 1991, chapter 14.

14. Günter Böhmer, *Die Verkehrte Welt : Moral und Nonsens in der Bildsatire*, London: Goethe-Institut, 1985. The topsy-turvy world is a literary topos discussed e.g. in E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, pp.94-98; M.M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984, (pp.370: 'The king's attributes are turned upside down in the clown; he is the king of a world "turned inside out".') See also e.g. Pieter Bruegel the Elder *Nederlandse Spreekwoorden* (1559), an oil painting on oak populated with literal depictions of Dutch proverbs.

15. F. Grove Palmer *The World Inverted*, (ND) a late Victorian slide reading in the Magic Lantern Society slide reading collection no. **91373.**

16. *Ibid.*

17. Ann Taylor, *Signor Topsy-Turveys's Wonderful Magic Lantern; or, The World Turned Upside Down*, London: Tabart & Co., 1810.

18. Deac Rossell, *Laterna Magica*, Stuttgart: Füsslin Verlag, 2008. pp.101-43.

19. Taylor, 1810.

20. Palmer (ND) (note 15).

21. (Horace Elisha Scudder?) 'The Magic Lantern' in *Tales from Dreamland By the author of 'Seven Little People and their friends.'*, London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1865, pp.88-95.

22. W.T. Stead *Real Ghost Stories collected and edited by William T. Stead. New edition re-arranged and introduced by Estelle W. Stead*, New York: George Doran Company, 1921, chapter 3.

23. *Loc. Cit.*

24. Wilkie Collins, *Armadale*, London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1866.

25. *The Story of Daniel,* (Riley Brothers, 18 slides, 1891), in Magic Lantern Society slide reading collection, no.91718.

26. Charles Dickens, 'The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton', in *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (*Pickwick Papers*), 1837, chapter 29.

27. *Loc. Cit.*

28. Fred Guida, *A Christmas Carol and its Adaptations*, North Carolina & London: McFarland & Company, 2000.

29. Philip Collins *Charles Dickens: The Public Readings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

30. Rev. Frederick Langbridge, *Dan Dabberton's dream: or the call of the Bells,* (ND), in Magic Lantern Society slide reading collection no. 90052.

31. Mark Guy Pearse, *Matt Stubb's dream: or, Christmas Eve at the Blue Boar*, (ca. 1897), in Magic Lantern Society slide reading collection no. 90067.

32. Charles Mackay, *The Dream of the Reveller: or, the Whiskey Demon*, (ND), in Magic Lantern Society slide reading collection no.91560.

Song Slides in the American Picture Palace

Esther Morgan-Ellis
657 Rock Chimney Lane
Dahlonega, GA 30533
emellis@gmail.com

Projected slides played a central role in motion-picture exhibition of the 1920s and '30s. They were creatively employed for a variety of purposes. As a practical tool, they advertised upcoming features and conveyed important information. At other times, slides contributed to the escapist fantasy that characterized picture-palace entertainment. Architect John Eberson, for example, used a Brenograph machine to project clouds onto the ceilings of his "atmospheric" theaters, which replicated exotic outdoor courtyards. (Eberson's effect was completed with plaster masonry, real trees, fountains, and stuffed birds.)[1] The Brenograph also could project frames and scenery from large-format slides.[2] The type of slide that was by far most important to picture-palace exhibition, however, was the song slide.

Song slides usually were used by the theater organist, although occasionally other performers would incorporate them into a special act.[3] During the 1920s and '30s, the organist was allotted a portion of the program known as the "organ solo." The organ solo was not necessarily a solo at all, for it often incorporated additional performers or audience participation. It was usually about ten minutes long and took place soon after the overture, but picture-show programming was quite flexible, and neither the length nor the position of the organ solo were rigidly determined. Programming depended somewhat on the strengths of the organist, but was primarily determined by the character of the theater.[4]

The theater organ developed with the picture palace. The organ first found a place in the theater because it offered the wide range of tone colors found in an orchestra. The organist, however, had an important advantage over the orchestra, for he could easily improvise film accompaniments.[5] He also was cheaper. The first organs were in the style of church instruments, but a unique theater organ quickly evolved to suit the needs of picture-palace exhibitors.[6] A British organ builder, Robert Hope-Jones, was responsible for most of the innovations behind the theater organ. He died soon after the first picture palaces were built, but his name was linked with the famous Wurlitzer "unit orchestra" organs for many years. A theater organ was defined by a number of characteristics. Some of these were technical, such as electric action, double touch key operation, unification of ranks, high wind pressure, and the iconic horseshoe console. Some concerned the sound of the instrument, such as the presence of a tremulant on every rank, the prominence of the tibia voice instead of the diapason, and the incorporation of a complete range of percussion instruments and sound effects.[7] By the 1920s, many theater organs could be operated from several consoles at the same time,[8] and the primary console was usually situated on a lift so that it could rise up out of the pit for the organ solo.[9]

As the theater organ became an integral part of the picture-palace experience, exhibitors sought new ways in which to turn their investment into a box-office draw. The organ solo soon emerged as a regular picture-palace feature. There is not much information about organ programming before the trade press began to review organ solos in the mid-1920s, but the evidence indicates that the earliest organ solos were of a strictly classical nature. Later community singing became popular, while many organists presented popular songs without inviting participation. Organists were free to draw from both art and popular repertoires, which they often combined in a single solo.[10] Organists also introduced creative additions to the organ solo, such as soloists (often hidden from view), films, costumes, decorations, fanciful lighting schemes,[11] and even miniature stage presentations.[12]

Almost all organists projected slides, no matter what repertoire they presented. Organists used two types of slides (apart from effect slides): lyric slides and communication slides. In the early years of the organ solo, slides were the only means by which an organist could communicate with his audience. Public address systems were not installed until 1927, at which point organists began to speak directly to their patrons.[13] Before the public address system, however, an organist required slides to tell a story, deliver a joke, or give singing directions. The text on these slides usually was set to a well-known tune, which the organist would play. The audience would read the text in time to the music. There is some indication that patrons might hum the melody, but it appears that they never sang the words.[14]

Unfortunately, few of these communication slides have survived. They often were created using cheap materials, and were probably discarded after use. However, the text from some of these slides has been preserved in the trade press. In 1927, for example, Albert F. Brown reproduced the text of the communication slides for his organ solo at the Granada and Marbro theaters in Chicago:

TITLE—THE MARRIAGE RIDDLE (Burlesque). (Play Mendelssohn's "Wedding March"). Opening (the following to melody, "Marching Through Georgia):

Folks, I've got a problem that I wish you'd solve for me,
For a year I've been keeping steady company,
But I don't know just how happy I am going to be,
If I go out and get married—

Oh gee—you see, I need your good advice,
Do you believe that married life is nice?
Please don't make a joke of this, but answer truthfully,
Do you think that I should get married?

Looks like you are all afraid to tell me anything,
But I heard when folks are happy that they always sing,
So I'll flash a song and if I hear your voices ring
I'll know that I should get married—

Before I start I warn you once again
This song is for the happy married men
So if you've not lived your married life successfully
Don't sing the words of this chorus.

(Insert chorus of popular song.)

I thought all the happy married men would sing right out
But there's no such animal I've learned without a doubt,
If there's any HAPPY married WOMEN let them shout
Loud as they can in this chorus.

(Insert Chorus—"Always.")

That proves there's few happy married women—don't forget
But I haven't hear from all you single people yet
Those of you who wouldn't dare get married on a bet
All join in on this chorus—

(Insert chorus of popular song.)

Now let's hear from both the married WOMEN and the MEN
And the ones that wish that they were single once again
and the SINGLE ones that wish that they were soon to wed
All join in this chorus—

(Insert chorus—"Russian Lullaby.)

(The following to melody "Here Comes the Bride.")

By all advice, marriage is nice,
If first you don't succeed, just try it over twice—
Love dreams come true, I'll prove to you
Don't say I'm wrong till you hear this sweet song—

TITLE SLIDE—BABY FEET GO PITTER PATTER[15]

Projecting the Lyrics

When an organist wanted to project lyrics, he could choose to do so either by slide or by film. Slide was by far the most popular method. An organist could purchase slides from a dealer, rent them from an exchange, accept a free set from a publisher, or create slides specifically for his solo. Some of the larger theaters created sets of slides for their organists on demand, but this was prohibitively expensive for most houses.[16] The appearance of slides varied enormously. The finest commercial sets included illustrations on every slide. Illustrators adorned comical songs with cartoon-style drawings and provided realistic figures and landscapes for sentimental songs. Most slides, however, contained only clear text on a black background. Organists often created their own slides by typing on a sheet of clear plastic (Fig. 1). Song lyrics on the slides were hyphenated to indicate a note change, so as to aid the participants in the absence of musical notes. A musical staff with notes appeared very occasionally, and then largely for visual effect. Sometimes an organist would abandon slides altogether. This was often done as a memory test for the participants, in which case the temporary absence of slides provided variety in the organ solo.[17]

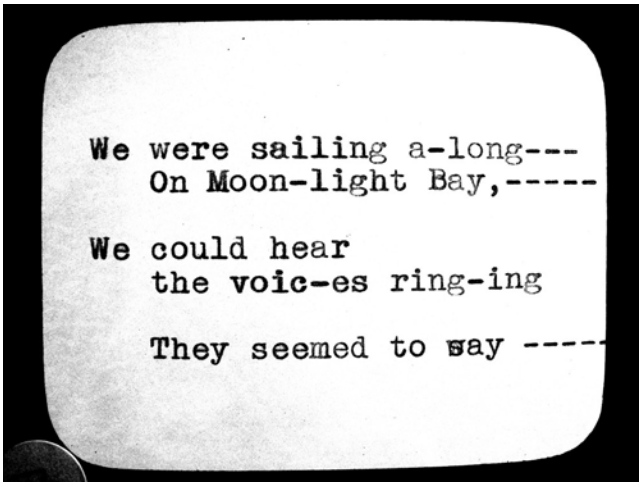


Fig. 1. With a typewriter and a sheet of plastic, any organist could create song slides on demand. Courtesy Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

In 1928, a *Variety* columnist aptly described the attraction of picture theaters for music publishers: "The picture house with its vast audience over and over each day soon came under the eagle eye of the music men as a song-plugging outlet."[18] During the 1920s, all of the major publishing firms maintained "special service" departments which developed and circulated organ solo materials. These departments then produced sets of song slides that contained lyrics for their latest numbers. Slide sets were often booked by theater chains and then rotated among the houses along with films

and stage shows.[19] Publishers usually offered these slides to organists at no charge in return for the publicity.[20] The organists were expected to return the expensive slides so that they could be reused, although the presence of these slides in theater collections confirms the publishers' complaint that they were often kept.[21]

Publishers such as M. Witmark & Sons,[22] De Sylva, Brown & Henderson,[23] and Remick[24] described their slide offerings with full-column advertisements in the *Exhibitors Herald-World*. Most of the slide sets mentioned in these advertisements contained only single songs, the verses and choruses of which were distributed across a handful of slides, but some included a narrative as well. In some cases, a narrative connected several song texts. On average, these sets contained 32 slides. In 1926, however, organist Henry Murtagh used a set of 50 songs slides released by Leo Feist, Inc. The set exploited five different Feist songs, and was the work of L. Wolfe Gilbert, a "special material expert" at Feist.[25] Publishers also released slide sets that combined new and old material. In these medleys, choruses from old favorites that had no commercial value would introduce a new song that the company wanted to sell.[26] Finally, a publisher would sometimes alter the lyrics to one of his own songs in order to suit an organ presentation. In 1926, Feist released a set of slides for the song "Too Many Parties, Too Many Pals," which incorporated an address supposedly given by a judge from his bench (the subject of the song, a fallen woman, was to be sentenced for her crimes). To heighten the impact of the address, Feist put the final chorus in the past tense.[27]

Organists typically felt free to alter commercial slides for their own use. The organist might interpolate his audience's favorite songs, or replace worn-out numbers with up-to-date hits. Organists also broke up commercial medleys so as to use the songs individually, and they often added singing instructions to the slides or changed existing instructions (Fig. 2).[28] Sometime organists reused old slides in other ways (Fig. 3), or removed texts for reasons that are difficult to decipher (Fig. 4).

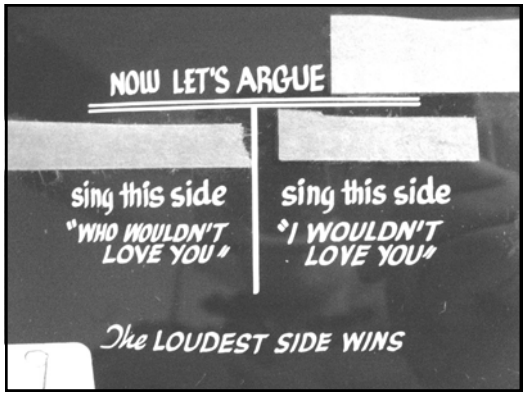


Fig. 2. In this slide, the organist has removed the text "Upstairs" and "Downstairs." Presumably, he provided singing directions via some other medium. He has also stricken the text "It Out" from the header, although it is not clear why. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Fig. 3. In this slide, the organist has removed the title of the song, "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree." He might have used this slide to preface the singing of another old favorite. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Fig. 4. The organist has removed the text "First on the Hit Parade some months ago—Now you never hear it much—." Perhaps he had been playing the song frequently and the comment was inappropriate for his audience. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Organists also developed their own specialties, often in collaboration with a publisher or slide producer. In 1927, organist Ted Meyn of the Pantages theater in Kansas City, Missouri, devised a clever setting for the recent hit "What's the Use of Crying." Meyn began his solo by playing a verse and chorus of the tune, with lyrics projected on the screen. Then, during the second verse, a plant in the audience began to sing "out of key, loud, mournful and very sour." After a second interruption, Meyn asked the man to please remain quiet. The plant begged Meyn to teach him how to sing, and the

organist obliged with a series of slides containing solfège [a music education method used to teach pitch and sight singing]. After leading the plant through his vocal exercises, Meyn invited him to sing a chorus of "What's the Use of Crying" for the crowd. In his column for *Exhibitors Herald*, Meyn informed his readers that the slides for his presentation were now available from the publisher of the song at no cost.[29]

In 1930, *Variety* announced that publishers had lost interesting in plugging their songs via song slide, since the expense was "estimated to run into the thousands" and the effect had been dampened by sound films.[30] At the same time, the national exhibitor-producers were taking control of organ solo development. By the early 1930s, all of the major chains had established centralized organ departments. At Paramount, Mr. Boris Morros was in charge of the creation and distribution of organ solos for all Paramount organists. "Cooperating with the publishers in plugging their songs," however, remained an important part of Morros's job.31 At RKO, Dan Parker was in charge of organ solos. Parker published a complete description of his duties in the *Herald* in 1932, in which he emphasized the collaborative nature of organ-solo production, the central role of music publishers, the tight schedule on which organists worked, and the freedom with which organists tailored the solos to their audiences:

> My particular service is to organists—musical *showmen* catering to varied types of audiences, each using his or her own style. Yet they must be serviced. The details are therefor intricate.
>
> My writer and myself discuss an idea for an organ presentation. (An "organ solo" does not mean enough.) The idea must appeal to audiences everywhere. The topic must be appreciated by all of our varied audiences. Then again, it must be flexible for different types of work. Religion, prohibition or other controversial subjects cannot enter into any organ presentation, for we endeavor to serve *all*. Music, a very important item is next. Songs, which the publishers are exploiting and which are appropriate, are selected. The writer now has his foundation.
>
> When he returns with the finished product, a few minor changes are probably made, then it is ready for the okay. The presentation is then discussed with the general music director. By him it is either rejected or accepted. If accepted, the work goes on.
>
> While music for the parodies is being obtained, the lantern slide manufacturer and his artist are called in. The writer, the manufacturer, his artist and myself take infinite care in the next step. Each slide is gone over, cartoons are thought of and drawn. When the slide man has the proper information, he is off. In a day or so, I received hand-painted cards. This gives me an idea of just what the slide will look like. These are okayed and the slides are delivered.
>
> Sufficient sets of slide, music and cue-sheets are made ready for the theatres. Now for the routing. Popular music is soon forgotten, therefore the presentations must be played very soon. Few presentations can be used after six or seven weeks. This being the case, the theatres are grouped for such a purpose, bearing in mind that the geographical location of each is of vital importance.
>
> In most cases, these presentations have but a few hours to reach the theatre next on the route. However, strange as it may seem, they do. Music and cue-sheets reach each organist long before the slides. This gives each enough time to adapt the presentation to his own work. When one of the organists (in my case, RKO organists) receives the slides, he knows exactly what to expect.
>
> But the work is not as yet completed. Although a new presentation is being prepared, my department manages to keep two or three weeks in advance of the playing date.
>
> RKO organists are allowed absolute freedom. The presentations may be used as a whole or only in part. Popular choruses are always left to the individual organist showman's discretion. Surely, he or she knows what his or her audience will sing. One presentation is supplied to each organist per week. Where there is a split-week policy, the organist is expected to supply his or her own presentation for one-half week. This, together with the fact that the organists may use only part of a regular presentation, tends to keep the minds of each in working order in case of any "break" in the service.[32]

Presenting the Sing

Organists who led community singing had many options available when they designed their organ solos. In most cases, the organist did not put much effort into presentation. Instead, he would provide a generic title for the solo—something like "Let's Sing,"[33] "Let's Sing and Be Happy,"[34] or "It's Time to Sing"[35]—and then lead his patrons in a string of unrelated tunes. Other times, the organist would use a simple theme to tie the songs together. Sometimes, however, an organist would provide a complete narrative for his community sing. He might tell a story,[36] take his patrons on a virtual trip around the world,[37] or direct his audience to accomplish some imagined task through song.[38]

Whatever theme or narrative an organist provided, he always had additional strategies available which could be interpolated into any sing. The most widespread was to divide the audience into competitive units (Fig. 5). Common divisions were men against women,[39] single patrons against those who were married,[40] and balcony seating against orchestra. Some organists became quite creative with their competitive sings. New York organist Leo Weber, for example, pitted "fatties" against "slenders."[41] The practice of competitive singing—which was directed by annotations on the slides—helped to build enthusiasm in every theater, and usually added to the humor as well. Dividing the audience into singing groups, however, did not necessarily imply competition. Division could also cast audience members in different roles to

Fig. 5. This instructional slide could be used to preface any song that divided the audience. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Fig. 6. In this special version of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," the boys sang the original lyrics while the girls interpolated new, up-to-date lines. The loudness of the boys' lyrics was indicated by the capital letters. Later, the boys and girls switched roles. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

achieve a theatrical effect (Fig. 6), or it could produce four-part harmony.42

The organist also had other methods for enlivening the sing. These usually made participation more difficult, and therefore more amusing. Sometimes, an organist would quit playing until the audience could no longer keep together.43 (This practice was particularly abhorred by critics of community singing, who saw silence as the ultimate offence to the dignified organ.) The organist might also provide a subversive accompaniment to challenge his patrons' musical ability. One such approach was to change keys every few measures (Fig. 7). And sometimes the challenge lay in simply reading the slides (Fig. 8).

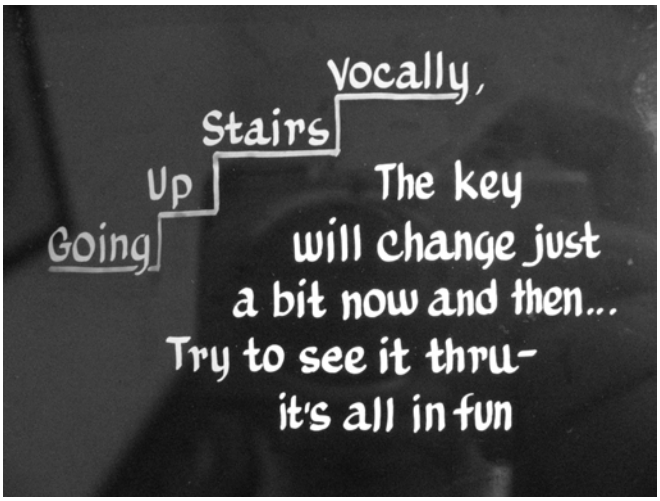


Fig. 7. This slide warned the audience that the organist was going to repeatedly change keys during the song. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Community singing in the picture palace was usually a lighthearted affair. It was often side-splittingly comical, and community singing was known to provoke hilarity amongst the patrons, even to the point of disrupting the picture-palace program.[44] The comedy was sometimes introduced in the song lyrics themselves. This could happen when the organist programmed a comic song such as "Down By the Winegar Woiks," a 1925 community singing number which was wildly popular in theaters across the country.[45] More often, however, comedy lyrics were found in parody versions of popular hits (Fig. 9), lisping choruses (Fig. 10), and tongue twisters set to familiar melodies (Fig. 11).

Above all, the comedy lay in the presentation of the sing. The organist might tell a funny story,[46] make jokes, or build the entire session up to a climactic punch line.[47] He also might give the patrons comical directions, such as to sing different words based on their lot in life (Fig. 12), to sing two different songs at the same time,[48] to whistle (Fig. 13),

to hum (Fig. 14), or to clap (Fig. 15).[49] The organist could also interrupt the singing to comical effect,[50] or plant an accomplice in the audience to cause trouble.[51] Despite all of this, there was still room in some houses for sentiment and loftier musical expression in the community sing. These presentations used most of the same songs, but left out the comedy arrangements and gags. In every case, an organist had to gauge his patrons and then provide the style of entertainment which they enjoyed.

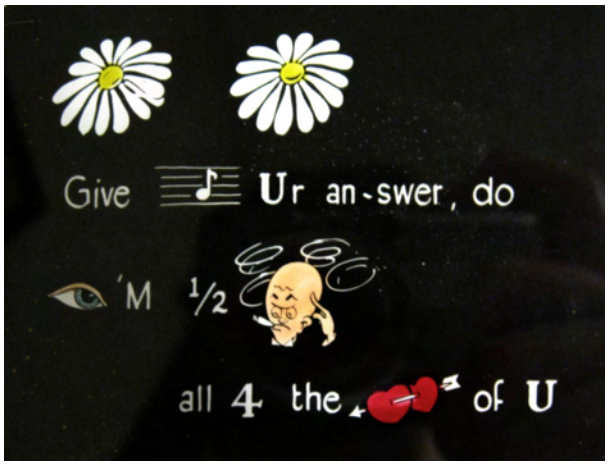


Fig. 8. These graphic puzzle slides were popular. The first one contains the opening lyrics of the 1892 song "Daisy Bell." The second is a bit more difficult to decipher. It contains the text to the 1903 barbershop classic "Sweet Adeline." Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

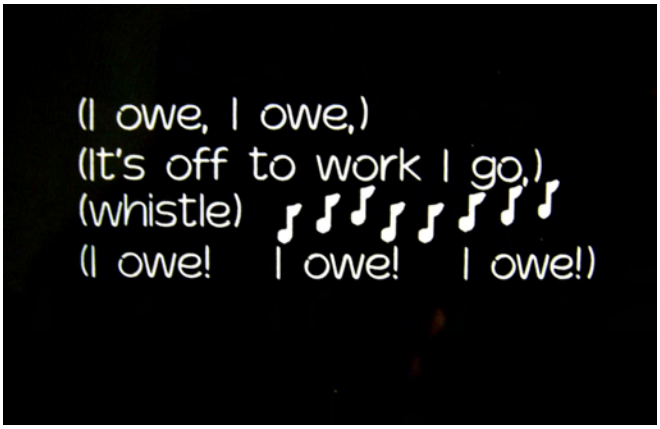


Fig. 9. A parody of the 1937 song "Heigh-Ho." Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Fig. 10. A lisping version of the 1925 hit "Cecilia." Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

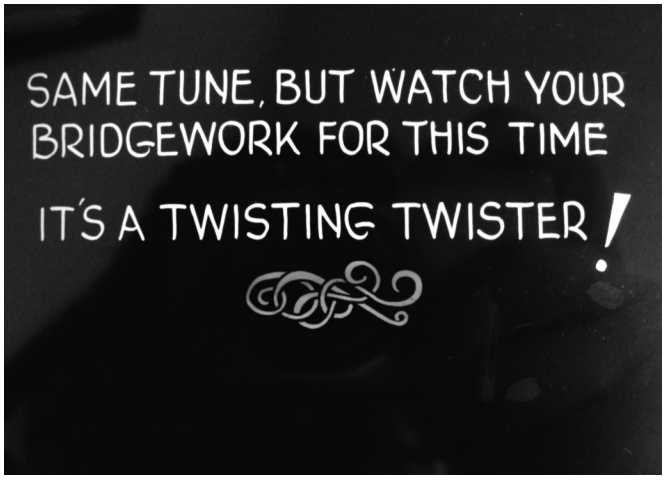


Fig. 11. Tongue twisters supplemented the standard community-singing repertoire. They were enormously popular and always had a humorous effect. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

Notes and References

1. David Naylor, *American Picture Palaces* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981), 68-9.

2. Lila King, *Framing the Cinema* (Atlanta: Preservation Maintenance Press, 2000), 9-10.

3. W. S. Russell, "'Orchestral Vogue' Proves Big Bet," *Exhibitors Herald-World*, September 21, 1929, 58.

4. Organists in "class" houses were more likely to program art music or incorporate a solo singer. For more on this, see Chapter 6.

5. George Tootell, "The Cinema Aspect," in *The Complete Organ Recitalist*, edited by Herbert Westerby (London: J. A. Godfrey & Sons, Ltd., 1927), 326-28.

6. Reginald Whitworth, *The Cinema and Theatre Organ* (London: Musical Opinion, 1932), 104-5.

7. Whitworth, 1-4.

8. "Double Console Organ Music Featured at Decatur Theatre," *Exhibitors Herald*, May 3, 1924, 98.

9. "Installs Hydraulic Lift for the Organ," *Exhibitors Herald*, March 1, 1924, XXIX.

10. For an example, see: "Organ Solos: Cornelius Maffie," *Exhibitors Herald*, April 30, 1927, 49.

11. Clark Fiers, "Light Values in Organ Solos," *Exhibitors Herald*, September 3, 1927, 17.

12. Albert F. Brown, organist at the Granada and Marbro theaters in Chicago, developed the presentation idea. His idea are detailed in the following article: Will Whitmore, "Brown Tells "Herald" Readers How to Use Scrimaphone," *Exhibitors Herald*, August 6, 1927, 9.

13. For the first mention of an organist speaking with the aid of a public address system, see: "Organ Solos: Don Isham," *Exhibitors Herald*, August 6, 1927, 49." For another early account, see: "New Device Invented For Organists by Anthony," *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World*, October 13, 1928, 45.

14. Harry L. Wagner, "Solo Numbers That Scores With Chicago Audiences," *Exhibitors Herald*, June 12, 1926, 42.

15. Walter Hirsch, "Four Arrangements of Organ Solos," *Exhibitors Herald*, September 3, 1927, 18.

16. Clark Fiers, "Playing the Organ Solo," *Exhibitors Herald*, February 19, 1927, 23.

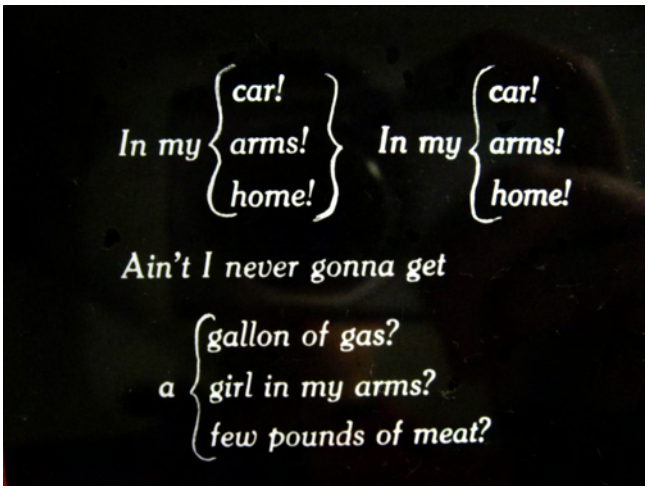


Fig. 12. This parody of the 1937 song "A Sailboat in the Moonlight" asked each patron to choose a line based on his or her lot in life. The result would have been cacophonous—and very amusing. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

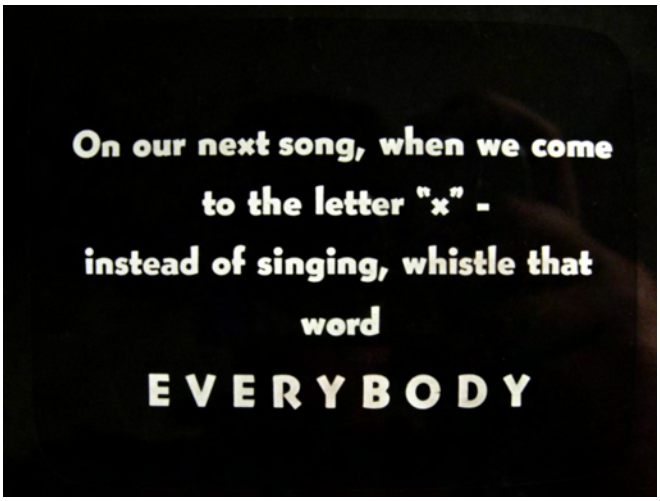


Fig. 13. This instructional slide prefaced lyrics for "She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain" in which the word "coming" was replaced each time with an "x". Fox Theatre

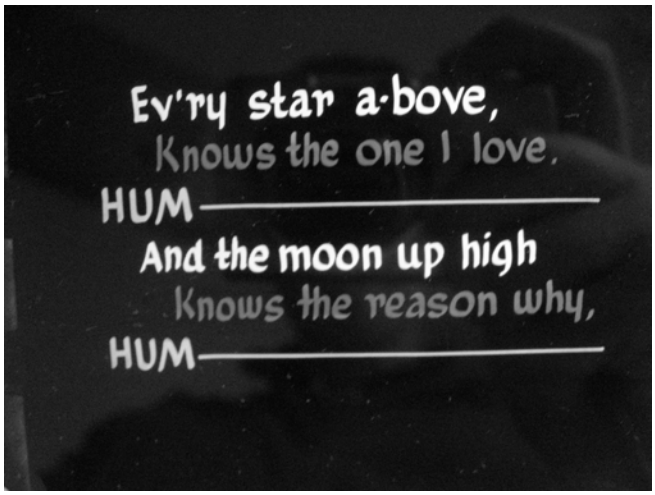


Fig. 14. This slide for the 1928 song "Sweet Sue—Just You" replaces the title line with humming. Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

17. "Organ Solos: Harold Rieder," *Exhibitors Herald*, March 30, 1929, 55.

18. "The Picture House Organist," *Variety*, October 6, 1928, 34.

19. Ibid, 34.

20. "Plans Community Song Fest," *Exhibitors Herald*, June 21, 1924, XXVI. This source, along with many others, emphasizes that publishers will only provide free slides to a theater that can demonstrate its ability to plug songs effectively (see also Harry L. Wagner, "Free Music Slides and Music Store Tie-Ups Are Available in Putting Over Organ Solos," *Exhibitors Herald*, January 23, 1926, 10).

21. "Music Men Seek Fair Treatment," *Exhibitors Herald*, February 4, 1928, 47.

22. “Advertisement,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, June 8, 1929, 50.

23. “Advertisement,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, February 9, 1929, 58.

24. “Advertisement,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, March 9, 1929, 44.

25. “Inside Stuff,” *Variety*, September 29, 1926, 51.

26. Harry L. Wagner, “Free Music Slides and Music Store Tie-Ups Are Available in Putting Over Organ Solos,” *Exhibitors Herald*, January 23, 1926, 10.

27. Harry L. Wagner, “Solo Numbers That Scored With Chicago Audiences,” *Exhibitors Herald*, June 12, 1926, 41. In this case, the judge’s address was supposed to delivered by an actor on stage, not sung or even necessarily read by the audience. Publishers often supplied scripts to accompany their slide sets, if appropriate. This melodramatic song and address were well-suited to a “class” house.

28. All of these practices are represented in the slide collection at the Atlanta Fox theater.

29. Ted Meyn, “The Vocal Lesson,” *Exhibitors Herald*, January 22, 1927, 17.

30. “Screen Slide Plugging Out!,” *Variety*, March 19, 1930, 65. The value of organ solos as a plugging outlet may have been overstated by some trade press sources, or at least it declined with the advent of film sound. A 1929 *Variety* article proclaimed that organists were only the 6th-most valuable plugging outlet, after talking films, radio, bands, discs, and acts. They were ranked above only musicals and night clubs (“Talkers Stand 1st as Song Plug, Act Now Rank Nearly Last; Radio 2d, With Reservation,” *Variety*, November 27, 1929).

31. Ed Dawson, “Publix Has Organist Service Station,” *Motion Picture Herald*, March 28, 1931, 61.

32. Dan Parker, “Preparing Organ Solos For The Circuit,” *Motion Picture Herald*, February 13, 1932, 28.

33. “Organ Solos,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, July 5, 1930, 51.

34. “Organ Solos,” *Motion Picture Herald*, March 28, 1931, 65.

35. “Organ Solos,” *Motion Picture Herald*, May 9, 1931, 50.

36. “Organ Solos: Henri Keates,” *Exhibitors Herald*, August 27, 1927, 48.

37. “Organ Solos: Bill Meeder,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, Aptil 26, 1930, 50.

38. “Organ Solos: Edmund C. Fitch,” *Exhibitors Herald*, June 25, 1927, 41.

39. “Organ Solos: Preston Sellers,” *Exhibitors Herald*, July 16, 1927, 42.

40. “Organ Solos: Bob West,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, September 14, 1929, 53.

41. “Organ Solos: Leo Weber,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, April 5, 1930, 51.

42. “Organ Solos: Henri Keates,” *Exhibitors Herald*, *Exhibitors Herald*, March 19, 1927, 36.

43. *Loop*, “Film House Reviews: Oriental (Chicago),” *Variety*, November 24, 1926, 23.

44. “Organ Solos: Earl and Elsie,” *Exhibitors Herald*, August 9, 1930, 53.

45. “Kahn's Varied Act Is Best in Months; All Supports Score High,” *Exhibitors Herald*, December 25, 1925, 129.

46. “Organ Solos: Art Thompson,” *Exhibitors Herald-World*, February 22, 1930, 57.

47. “The Organ Club,” *Variety*, August 25, 1926, 25.

48. “Organ Solos: Henri A. Keates,” *Exhibitors Herald*, April 2, 1927, 46.

49. “Pennsylvanians End Successful 7-Week Chicago B. & K. Run,” *Exhibitors Herald*, February 27, 1926, 62.

50. “Organ Solos: Merle Clark and Elsie Thompson,” *Motion Picture Herald*, September 19, 1931, 66.

51. Ted Meyn, “The Vocal Lesson,” *Exhibitors Herald*, January 22, 1927, 17.

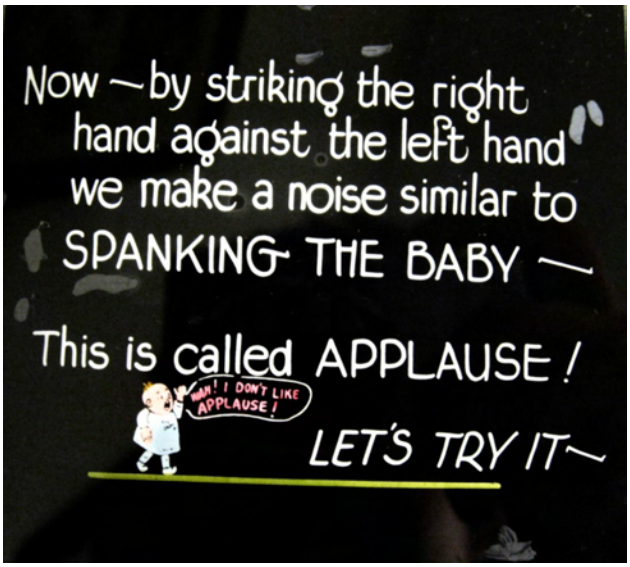

Now — by striking the right hand against the left hand we make a noise similar to SPANKING THE BABY —
This is called APPLAUSE!
AW! I DON'T LIKE APPLAUSE!
LET'S TRY IT —

Fig. 15. This slide encouraged patrons to clap (and possibly laugh). Fox Theatre Archives, Atlanta.

The Research Page provides short summaries of scholarly research articles related to magic lantern history in a variety of disciplines. For a complete bibliography of research articles related to the magic lantern, visit the Zotero Magic Lantern Research Group at: http://www.zotero.org/groups/magic_lantern_research_group.

Five New Ph.D. Dissertations Related to Magic Lanterns

Douglas Robert John Small. 2013. *Dementia's Jester: the Phantasmagoria in Metaphor and Aesthetics from 1700-1900.* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow. Abstract:

In 1792, the inventor and illusionist Paul Philidor unveiled the 'Phantasmagoria' to the people of Paris. Coined by combining the Greek words 'phantasma' (appearance, vision, ghost) and 'agora' (assembly), Philidor had intended the name to suggest a vast crowd of the undead, a riotous carnival of phantoms. He promised his audience that, using the projections of a magic lantern and other ingenious mechanical devices, he would show them the illusory shapes of ghosts and monsters, reunite lovers separated by death, and call fiends out of hell. However, this exhibition of illusory spectres was to become something far more than a mere footnote in the history of Romantic popular entertainment. The Phantasmagoria was to assume a metaphorical function in the mindscape of the period; this cavalcade of spectres was to come to serve as an image for not only the fantastic terrors of dreams and hallucinations, but also for the unbounded creative power of the imagination. Besides this, the metaphor of the phantasmagoria was to subsume into itself an idea which had its origin in the 'Curiosity Culture' of the previous century: the curious collection. As time wore on, this Curious – or Phantasmagorical – collection became a symbol by which writers of the late Nineteenth Century could signal their resistance to bourgeois conformity and their own paradoxical celebration and rejection of consumer culture. This work examines the evolution of the Phantasmagoria metaphor as well as the development of its associated aesthetic: the aesthetic of the curious collection – the collection of weird and fabulous objects that astonishes the senses and confuses the mind, erasing the boundaries between reality and fantasy. **Abstract from University of Glasgow webpage (http://theses.gla.ac.uk/4212/).**

Esther Marie Morgan-Ellis. 2013. *Organist-led Community Singing in the American Picture Palace, 1925-1933.* Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University. Abstract:

During the 1920s, most urban Americans participated in community singing at least once a week. They did so at the local picture palace, a multimedia venue that combined motion pictures with live entertainment. These stately theaters, found in cities across the nation after 1913, represented the cultural acceptance of motion pictures as a form of entertainment suitable for the middle class. Since 1905, films exhibited in urban nickelodeon theaters had been attracting a working-class audience. To counteract negative associations between the motion picture and its rough clientele, picture-palace exhibitors offered their patrons every luxury, including air conditioning, comfortable lounges, glamorous décor, and complimentary child care. Individual theaters replicated the architecture and ornamentation of famous palaces, opera houses, and hotels, while the attentive service made visitors feel like European nobility. Among the luxuries in store for the visitor was a diverse program of live entertainment, including an overture, an organ solo, and a stage show. The overture was presented by the house orchestra, while the stage show featured guest artists and local favorites, most of whom performed in costume before an elaborate set. Audience singing was sometimes led by stage performers or band leaders, or by sing-along films (popular throughout the '20s and '30s). Most of the time, however, community singing was led by the organist. The term "organ solo" is the trade designation for the portion of the show over which the organist had complete control. The organist could use his ten minutes in a variety of ways, but in many theaters the organ solo was dedicated to community singing. The organist used lantern slides to project song lyrics onto the movie screen. He also used slides to communicate with his patrons.

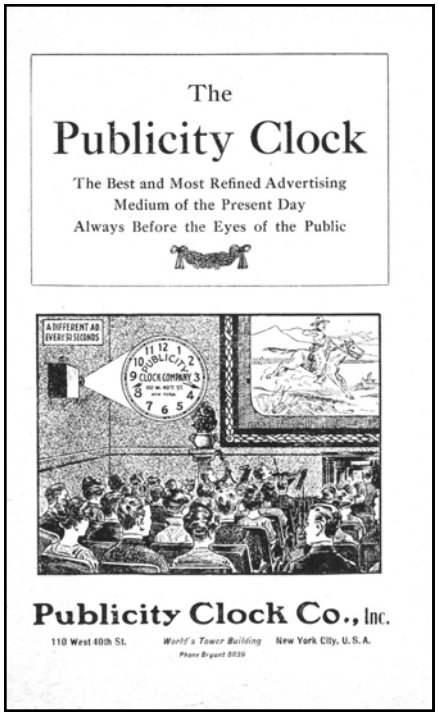
Community singing was practiced in theaters across the country, but it was not welcome in "class" picture houses that offered highbrow entertainment. In addition to this, trade-press commentators criticized the practice and listed reasons for which it should be abolished. Apologists noted that, while community singing did not utilize the talents of the organist or the capabilities of the organ, it was loved by audiences and would not disappear until it fell out of favor. An organist who practiced community singing crafted his presentation style based on the theater's location. An organist in a downtown house tried to appeal to a broad audience and did not expect any one patron to attend regularly. A neighborhood organist, on the other hand, had to develop a committed local patronage in order to keep the theater in business. To do so he would encourage community spirit and become involved in local affairs. He might also form an "organ club," which he could use as a basis to admit members, invite requests, and recognize individual patrons as a part of his solo.

Community singing was a popular form of entertainment, but it served other needs of the film and music industries as well. To begin with, it was an important vehicle for song plugging in the 1920s and '30s, and music publishers provided organists with free slides to ensure that their latest songs received exposure. This arrangement benefitted both parties. The publishers received cheap advertising that was particularly effective, for movie patrons not only heard the songs but actually sang them. The organist in turn was spared a great deal of work in preparing his solo. The attractive slides provided by publishers not only included song lyrics but also narratives, jokes, and illustrations. Exhibitors, on the other hand, used community singing to police the behavior of their audiences. Organists and theater managers noticed that patrons were more polite to one another after engaging in community singing. They also observed that patrons who had participated exuberantly in community singing were more likely to enjoy the remainder of the program, including the stage show and feature film.

The role of the organist, and therefore the role of community singing, changed enormously with the introduction of film sound. Exhibitors began to wire their theaters for sound in the late 1920s, and most musicians lost their jobs as a result. Organists were only retained in the largest and most important picture palaces, where they were valued as the last human element in an increasingly mechanized program. Community singing gave the sound-era patrons a rare opportunity to make noise. Participatory culture in the movie theater, however, declined throughout the 1930s. **The full text of this dissertation will soon be available online. Esther Morgan-Ellis is a member of our society.**

Jeremy W. Groskopf. 2013. *Profit Margins: The American Silent Cinema and the Marginalization of Advertising.* Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University. Abstract:

In the early years of the twentieth century, the unique new medium of motion pictures was the focus of significant theorization and experimentation at the fringes of the American advertising industry. Alongside the growth of the nickelodeon, and the multiple shifts in the American cinema's business model in the 'transitional era,' various individuals at the margins of the advertising industry attempted, and most often failed, to integrate direct consumer-goods advertising regularly into motion picture theaters. Via technology as diverse as the glass slide, the commercial trailer, and the advertising wall-clock, cinema patrons of the 1910s witnessed various attempts by merchants and manufacturers to intrude upon their attention in the cinema space. Through research in the trade presses of the cinema, advertising, and various consumer goods industries, along with archival ephemera from the advertising companies themselves, this dissertation explores these various on and off-screen tactics for direct advertising attempted in silent cinemas, and their eventual minimization in the American cinema experience. Despite the appeal of the new, popular visual medium of cinema to advertisers, concerns over ticket prices, advertising circulation, audience irritation, and the potential for theatrical 'suicide-by-advertising,' resulted, over a mere fifteen years, in the near abandonment of the cinema as an advertising medium. As a transitional medium between the 19th century forms of print and billboarding, and 20th century broadcasting, the silent cinema was an important element in the development of modern advertising theories. **Abstract from Georgia State University Digital Archives: http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/communication_diss/47/**


The
Publicity Clock
The Best and Most Refined Advertising Medium of the Present Day Always Before the Eyes of the Public
A DIFFERENT AD EVERY 30 SECONDS
PUBLICITY CLOCK COMPANY
Publicity Clock Co., Inc.
110 West 40th St. World's Tower Building New York City, U.S.A.

The Publicity Clock (1915) for advertising in movie theaters. Wells collection.

Kelly F. W. Egan. 2013. *The Projector's Noises: A Media Archaeology of Cinema Through the Projector.* Ph.D. dissertation, Ryerson University. Abstract:

This dissertation provides a media archaeology of the film projector, concentrating on the conceptualization and use of projector noise through the lens of the modernist and contemporary avant-garde, that offers new ways of understanding cinema, interpreting embodied cinematic space, and extending the discourse on audiovision in general. Looking toward the projector allows us to see how it is a productive labourer in the construction of cinematic experience. Listening to its noises—which have been framed as insignificant and/or unwanted—allows us to understand the way cinema is in fact a performance art with a certain kind of liveness. Part One of this dissertation traces and alternative history of cinema focused on the projector beginning with the pre-cinema technologies of the camera obscura, the telescope and the magic lantern. Part Two analyzes how the avant-garde has engaged with the projector-as-instrument during three major technological transitional moments in cinema: first, early cinema and the rise of the Cinématographe by looking at Italian futurists, specifically Arnaldo Ginna and Bruno Corra's interest in the projector-as-instrument and the relationship between the Cinématographe and Luigi Russolo's *intonarumori;* second, the advent of sound-on-film technology and how it was used to produce synthetic noises by Oskar Fischinger, László Moholy-Nagy, Peter Kubelka and the author; and third, at the moment of the digital transition filmmakers like Bruce McClure and Karl Lemieux who have returned to explore the performativity and materiality of the projector in their artwork. At a time when the discourse of cinema is rife with rheotoric proclaiming its death (under threat of the digital revolution), this dissertation serves to establish that film is far from dead; through the projector-as-instrument, the future is bright...and very noisy. **Abstract from: http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/dissertations/1320/**

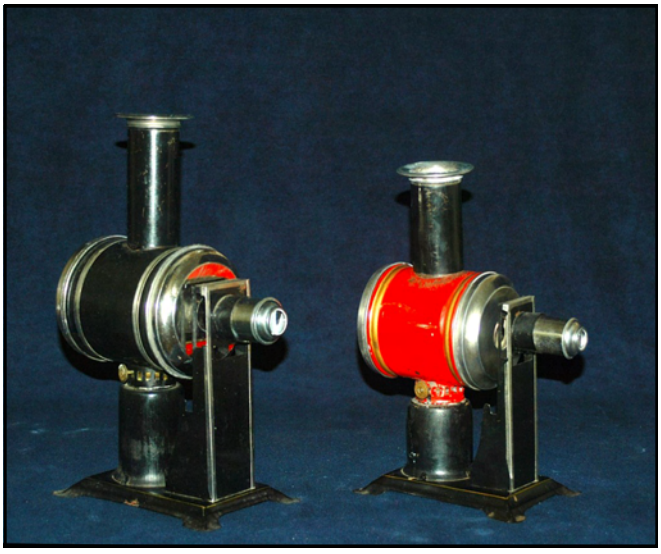
EDISON'S GREATEST MARVEL
THE VITASCOPE
"Wonderful is The Vitascope. Pictures life size and full of color. Makes a thrilling show." NEW YORK HERALD, April 24, '96.

Poster for Edison's Vitascope movie projector. Library of Congress.

Braden P.L. Hutchinson. 2013. *Objects of Affection: Producing and Consuming Toys and Childhood in Canada, 1840-1989.* Ph.D. dissertation, Queens University. Abstract:

This thesis examines the significance of toy production, distribution, marketing and consumption to Canadian understandings of childhood. Drawing on Patrick J. Ryan's concept of the discursive landscape of modern childhood and Daniel Thomas Cook's commercial persona of the child consumer, it explores the effect of toy controversies on a number of social, political and economic issues between the arrival of manufactured toys in Canada in the mid-nineteenth century and the rise of postindustrial capitalism. The toy industry, the social sciences, consumer activists and the Canadian state all played a pivotal role in raising the social significance attached to toy consumption. In the end, debates about toys highlighted popular manifestations of complex political and social issues by placing children and their material culture at the symbolic centre of "adult" conflicts. **Abstract from Queens University digital archives: http://www.academia.edu/4032961/**.

This dissertation contains only one brief mention of magic lanterns, referring to an article in a magazine on how to make magic lanterns. Nevertheless, there is considerable discussion of how toys were marketed and advertized in the 19th century, and the pattern in Canada is similar to practices in the United States at the same period, both in the wording of advertisements and the clear differentiation between toys intended for boys and those for girls. The author also discusses the importance of toys as Christmas gifts and the dominance of imported German toys, which would include magic lanterns, in the Canadian market in the years before World War I [see: Kentwood D. Wells. 2010. Magic lanterns: Christmas toys for boys. *The Magic Lantern Gazette* 22 (1):3-29].



The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada

Announces Its Third Annual

$500 Student Essay Award

The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada is pleased to announce its third annual Student Essay Award contest.

The award has been created to invite the participation of young scholars, archivists, and artists in research on the magic lantern. We welcome submissions related to the culture, practice, and study of the lantern, from the 1600s to the present, anywhere in the world, but most especially in America or Canada.

Entrants must be enrolled in a graduate or undergraduate academic program at the time of submission. Students may submit essays originally written for academic courses, but may not submit anything previously published in print or online. Submissions should be written in English and should not exceed 5,000 words.

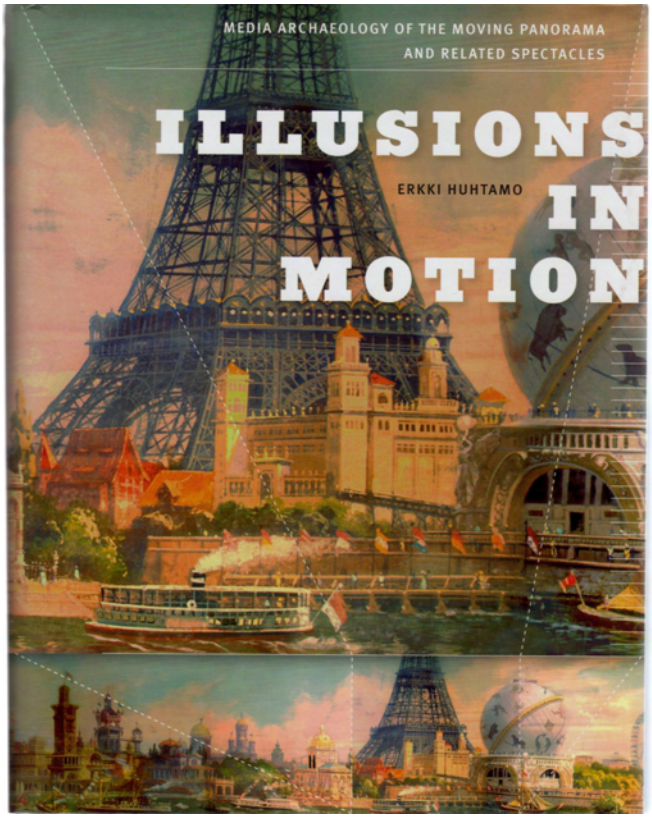
All submissions are due electronically by April 1, 2014.

A committee of the Society will select the winner. The award, which consists of a monetary prize of US $500, will be announced on June 1, 2014, and the essay will be published soon thereafter in *The Magic Lantern Gazette*, the Society's print and on-line research journal. The winner also will be invited to make a presentation at the Society's Convention, to be held near Boston on July 10-13, 2014.

Please send your submissions (in Microsoft Word format) to the editor of *The Magic Lantern Gazette*:

Kentwood Wells (kentwood.wells@uconn.edu)

To review back issues of the *Magic Lantern Gazette*, please visit **http://library.sdsu.edu/scua/online-materials/magic-lantern-pubs/gazette**



Erkki Huhtamo. 2013. *Illusions in Motion. Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles.* MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. ISBN 978-0-262-01851-7. 438 pp., illustrated. $45.00 (hardcover).

Erkki Huhtamo's new book on the history of the moving panorama is, quite simply, the best scholarly treatment of media archaeology published to date. The only comparable book is Richard Altick's classic *The Shows of London* (1978). Altick's book, however, belonged to an earlier era of scholarship, when authors had to painstakingly comb through archival material in museums and libraries to reconstruct the culture of an earlier era. Huhtamo, a member of our society, makes full use of such sources as well, but he also takes advantage of the more recent advent of many digital archives, from 19th century newspapers and magazines to Google Books. These sources, which provide the material for so-called "Digital Humanities," allow scholars to find, in a matter of weeks or months, material that would have taken an earlier generation of scholars decades to unearth. In fact, digital archives yield so much material that there is a real danger of resulting scholarship becoming little more than an annotated catalog of information. It takes a true scholar to convert such information into knowledge. This is where Huhtamo excels, weaving together information from many sources to bring to life the story of moving panoramas, a form of visual entertainment even less familiar to the general public than magic lanterns. The book is beautifully written, refreshingly free of the sort of academic jargon that weighs down so many scholarly books. Readers who lack previous knowledge of moving panoramas (which will be most readers) will find an engaging story that brings to life a forgotten area of visual entertainment culture. The book is enhanced by abundant and carefully chosen illustrations, many of them from the author's personal collection of broadsides and other ephemera related to moving panoramas. To call this collection "museum quality" is superfluous, as there is no museum in the world with such a rich collection of visual material. Furthermore, the author makes full use of such sources. In many books of this type, illustrations of a few broadsides appear more or less as decorations. Huhtamo actually has read these broadsides and other printed material in great detail, allowing him to reconstruct the organization and content of moving panorama shows.

The moving panorama was a unique form of visual entertainment that became popular in the mid-19th century, especially in the United States. Traveling showmen crisscrossed the country by rail, bringing their moving panoramas to big cities and small towns. These panoramas were huge paintings on canvas, stored on rollers and unrolled before the audience, accompanied by sound and light effects and commentary from the showman, serving as a lecturer. The subjects were those suitable for spectacular presentation: Biblical scenes, Civil War battles, Arctic exploration, river voyages, and geological history, among others. In the first half of the 19th century, moving panorama showmen brought exciting visual entertainment to audiences who had little access to images of any kind. Eventually, the rather cumbersome moving panoramas disappeared, due in part to competition from magic lanterns, and particularly the advent of photography, which allowed for the mass production and dissemination of an almost infinite variety of images. Huhtamo devotes a full chapter to the interactions of magic lanterns and moving panoramas, including a clear introduction to magic lantern culture, especially in the United States.

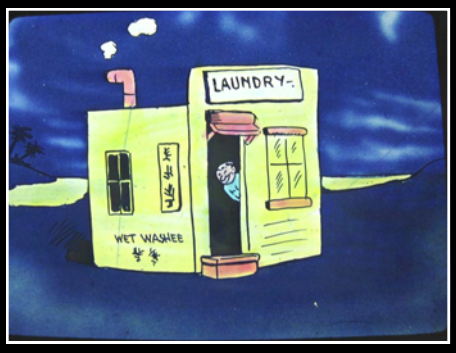
A major accomplishment of this book is to place the history of moving panoramas in the broader context of other visual media, from peepshows, dioramas, and non-moving panoramas to magic lantern shows, dissolving views, and stereopticon lectures. There also is substantial discussion of the development of the moving panorama as a literary device in the writings of authors both famous and obscure. This book is a treasure-trove of detailed information, from the text to the figure captions to the chapter endnotes. Many of the endnotes are not just reference citations, but mini-essays and digressions on all sorts of interesting topics, from the technical aspects of panorama construction to the lives of previously unknown panorama showmen.

I can't really do justice to this book in such a short review; put it on your Christmas list.—**The Editor**.

The lot up-on the o-ther side
Was bought by Mis-ter Cohn
Now all I do is walk
next door
When-e'er I want a loan.

A lit-tle Wop then took a shop
And say he's do-ing fine
And all day long
you hear his song
Of 'Shine 'em Mis-ter Shine'

A Chi-na-man then came a-long
His name was Ah Chin Lee
And now we have this thing
they call
A Chi-nese Laun-der-y.



And now we've got a City Hall
A Court House and a Jail
And here's the lat-est
pic-ture of
The TAM-I-AM-I TRAIL.

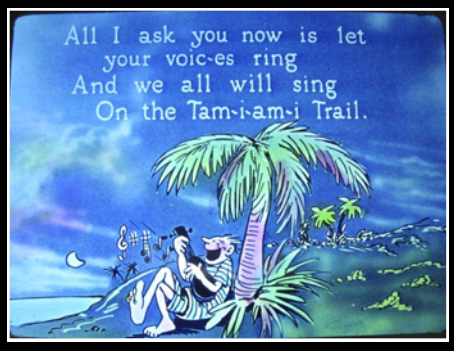
When you wan-der down the
Tam-i-am-i Trail — Tam-i-am-i Trail
Pay us just a lit-tle call.

I am giv-ing you these in-vi-ta-tions
You will get a 'treat' for I'll have
you meet
All the lit-tle wife's
re-la-tions

Her Un-cle Joe and her Aunt Flo
the Ba-by and me
You'll find we'll all be glad
to greet you there with a smile

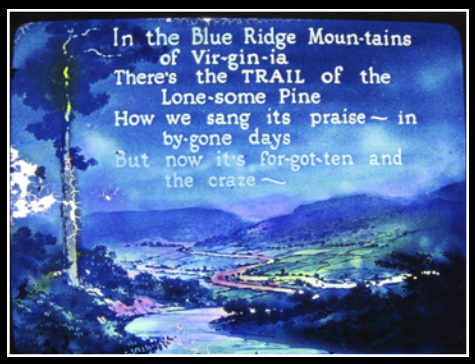
Soon I'll wan-der down the
Tam-i-ami Trail — Tam-i-am-i Trail
Where it leads down to the sea
There is where the sun is shin-ing dai-ly
Ev-ry lit-tle peach sit-ting on the beach
Strum-min' on a uk-u-le-le

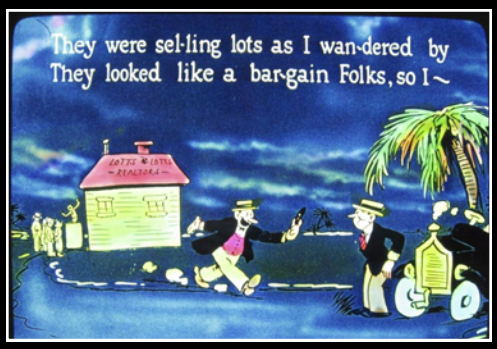
All I ask you now is let
your voic-es ring
And we all will sing
On the Tam-i-am-i Trail.



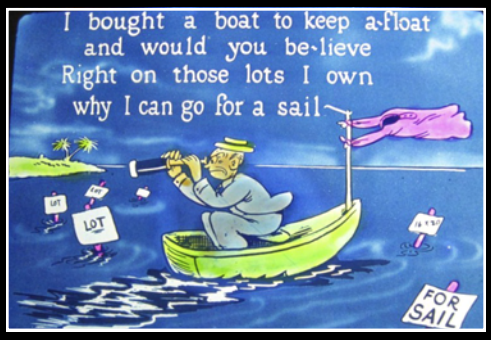
I'll build a two by four just for
my ba-by and me
I mean a brand new Bam-boo
Bung-a-loo with-out fail
An-y won-der why I wan-na set-tle down
I'm gon-na set-tle down on the
Tam-i-am-i Trail.

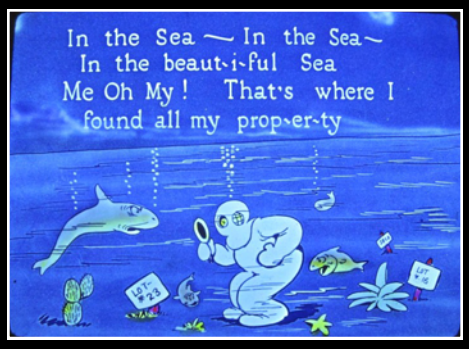
Song slides for "On the Tamiami Trail." The slides feature ethnic stereotypes of immigrants typical of the early 20th century, including Germans, Italians, Jews, and Chinese. Esther Morgan-Ellis collection.

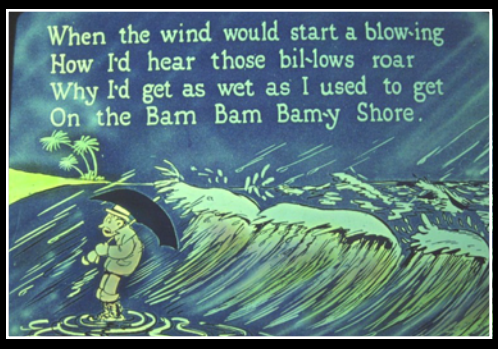


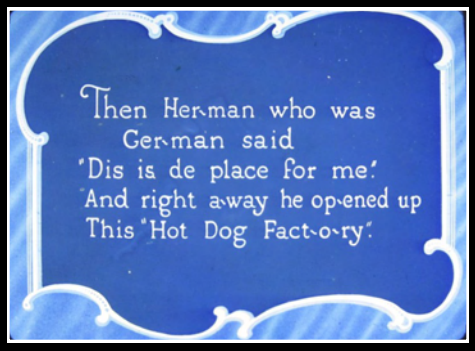


Things looked great but soon I start-ed
frown-ing
Tide be-gan to rise ~ to my great sur-prise
Had to run to keep from drown-ing.
SOLD









Song slides for "On the Tamiami Trail" (continued on p. 23). Esther Morgan-Ellis collection.